**God Incarnate**

Based on [John 1:1-18](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn1.1-18)

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The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day

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The gospel reading for Christmas Day is about the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. God is Spirit, but when the time was right he took on human flesh--incarnation”--and he lived among us.

From eternity, there was the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We cannot comprehend this. Eternity is too great of a mystery. Someone once asked Martin Luther what he thought God was doing before he created heaven and earth, Luther retorted “**Creating hell for people who ask such idle questions.**” Luther was being facetious, but his point is hard to miss: We cannot know who God is in himself, apart from how he acts in his creation on earth, and to attempt to do so is blasphemy and presumption. St. Paul writes in Colossians: “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. 2:9).

All we can know and confess about God in Himself is that he is eternally three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is God, The Son is God, The Holy Spirit is God, there are not however three Gods but one Godhead…one God. And though Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each God and one God; The Father is not the Son; The Son is not the Spirit; The Spirit is not the Father. How can this be? It is a mystery, because God by nature is greater than our knowledge and understanding.

But to us the fullness of God is revealed in the flesh of Jesus Christ. He is the self revelation of God for us. He makes God known to us. John writes, “**No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known**.” In other words…God, who is at God’s side, has made God known. Jesus said to his disciples, “**If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him...Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father**.”

The Son of God is also known to be the Word of God. The first words of the bible are “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” In revealing the true identity of Jesus Christ, John the Evangelist also hearkens back to the beginning. The first words of the Gospel of John are, “**In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him**.”

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus prayed to His Father in heaven, “**And now, Father, glorify me in your own preence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed**” (John 17:5).

At another time, Jesus told the Jews that Abraham had rejoiced to see him. They said, “**You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am**” (8:57-58).

The Confession of Christmas is that Jesus of Nazareth, born of the virgin Mary, is in fact the eternal Word of God. He is the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us.

In the Nicene Creed we say of Jesus Christ, “**He was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man**.” These are two different statements. That the Son was made man means he became one of us, took on our nature and is himself a son of Adam and Eve.

The incarnation, however, confesses only that he became a part of our world to be revealed to our world. Not that God wasn’t always involved in our world, but in one sense he was never a part of it. There are two worlds of creation, the visible and the invisible, flesh and spirit. We say also in the creed that God is, “**Maker of heaven and earth; of all things visible and invisible.**”

There is the invisible realm of heaven where God and his angels dwell, and though they are always involved in our world, they are not really a part of it. God created the heavens and the earth, but he was never really a part of the earth. In the Old Testament lesson, we learn that God once dwelt with his people in the Tabernacle built by Moses. But His almighty presence was *signified and shrouded* in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. The presence of God with his people of old was amorphous, mysterious, veiled in a cloud.

The incarnation testifies that God who is Spirit comes into the world veiled, no longer in a cloud or any other disguise, but in flesh…the stuff of earth, the stuff of our world that He created. He can be seen, touched, approached. As John writes elsewhere, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands concerning the word of life.”

“**The word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. …For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ**.”

The incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ ushered in the dawn of a new age, an age of grace and truth. The angel announces Peace on earth among those with whom he is pleased. Our Epistle says, “**But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy.”**

Because of the incarnation, Jesus Christ is our Immanuel, God with us. And he came to be with us in order to die for us. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. The word became flesh so that he could lay down his life for us; he became man to love the world like a man; cleansing us from our sins and showing the heart of God is love.